

APRIL, 1971

THIS IS A
CALL TO PRAYER
FOR
THE LORD'S WORK
IN
COLOMBIA

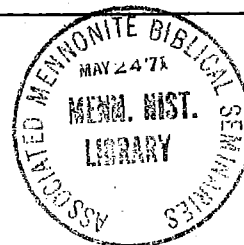
COLOMBIAN NEWS

NUMBER FIFTY-EIGHT



Cachipay, Cund., Colombia, S. A.

INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE MENNONITE MISSION IN COLOMBIA



"HASTA LUEGO!", GENE AND DORENE

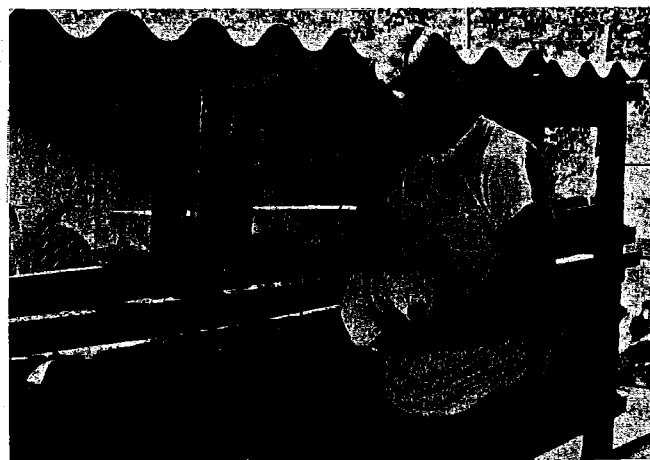
At the end of April, Dorene and Eugene Claassen completed their two-year term of voluntary service at Cachipay. They will take up residence in Gene's home community of Marlin, Washington. So meaningful has been their contribution that it is with deep regret that we bid them farewell.

They shared in the work on a variety of fronts. Gene was active in the community development program, first with the road construction, and then with the animal program, introducing rabbits, sheep, chickens and ducks. Dorene taught bookkeeping and accounting, and helped with entertaining guests. Both taught English in the school and looked after the accounts of the school and property.

It is impossible to enumerate the many ways in which Dorene and Gene helped lighten the load and make the work pleasant. We especially appreciated the way they have identified with the total mission program and have related to the local church in Cachipay.

Thank you, Dorene and Gene, for coming.
We hope you'll be back.

Hasta luego!



NEW PROJECTS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Bogota Mennonite Church appointed a committee of five to restudy its Christian Education Program. After much study and prayer, the following changes were presented to and accepted by the congregation:

1. To conduct separate Sunday morning worship services for the children and adults with a united worship service once a month.
2. To cancel the usual Sunday school hour and to teach Bible in the following ways:
 - a. Through graded children's Bible clubs which meet on Saturdays.
 - b. Through Bible camps, held at least twice a year for each age group.
 - c. Through short, intense Bible studies held on Sunday mornings at least twice a year.
 - d. Through the youth, women and men's organizations.

The new program, in effect for approximately four months, has created a great deal of interest and hard work for many members. In January we held our children's Bible camp. At the present time, we are planning a six-week, intense Bible study and a men's camp. Through experience, we have recognized the need for leadership training and are, therefore, planning a workshop for Bible club leaders. God is blessing our efforts in finding more effective ways in relating the gospel to the people of Bogota.

BOGOTA CHILDREN'S BIBLE CAMP

January 19 was an exciting day for the children of the Bogota church. We all got together at the church to go down to Cachipay. The two-hour trip was a bit windy and rainy as we rode on the back of the truck, but we had a lot of fun. There were many different activities in camp, such as swimming, hiking and cookouts. The theme of the camp was "Walking with God." We had Bible classes and Bible memorization.



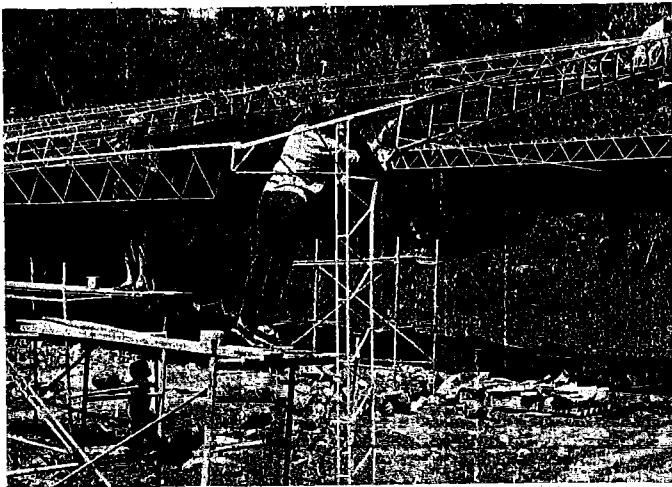
At the end of the three-day camp, we had a contest between different groups. We really studied our Bible verses and lessons! At night we would sit around candles studying because there were problems with the electricity. We also had a puppet show as a result of our craft classes.

It was an experience that the 34 kids who went will not forget! We learned a lot about walking with God!

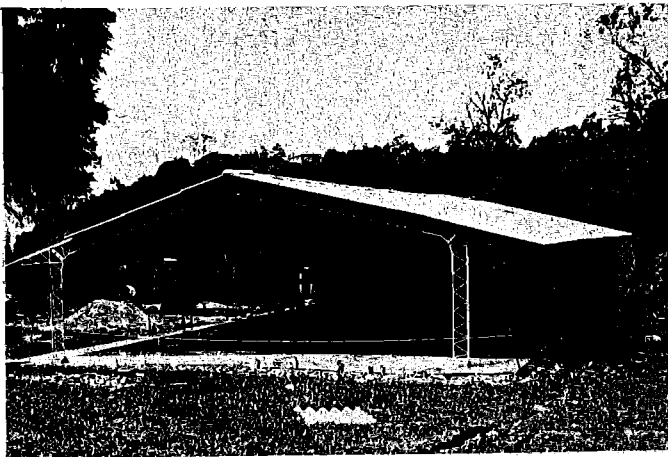
A camper,
Mark Klaassen

NEW DINING HALL CONSTRUCTED

Late in January work was begun on the new dining hall at Cachipay. It is located on the former school playground and football field where there seems to be a minimum of ground shifting. It was hoped that the construction would be completed in six weeks, but due to untimely rains, and other delays, it was prolonged an additional three weeks. Voluntary help from church members, especially from La Mesa, was greatly appreciated.



The roomy, steel and brick structure will accommodate up to 150 persons. Because of the year-round spring-like climate, the dining area is being left open at the sides. Thus, it can also serve as a sheltered play area for the school children or retreaters in rainy weather.



Within the brick walls is a large kitchen area, a section for washing dishes, a storeroom and a bedroom and bath for the cooks. We are very grateful to Eldon Barger of Avon Lake, Ohio, for drawing the plans for us and for giving us many helpful and imaginative suggestions.

The Mennonite Youth Retreat over Palm Sunday weekend inaugurated the new facilities. The dining hall enables us to accommodate large groups for church retreats. The grounds and buildings are being made available to the entire evangelical community in Colombia.



SCOTTISH MISSIONARY CHALLENGES WORKERS



"I'm not going to criticize Martha this morning," said Colin Crawford after reading the Biblical texts relating Martha's three encounters with Jesus. He traced her spiritual development and showed how Jesus was able to help her because of her sincerity in expressing her true feelings.

It was a day of rich blessing for Colombian Mennonite workers who met for fellowship at the Cachipay retreat grounds on March 27. After the morning message and discussion, the group met for a fellowship lunch and joined in several close volleyball matches.

In the afternoon session, Colin Crawford, Plymouth Brethren missionary from Scotland, gave another heartsearching message based on Israel's decline under the leadership of the high priest Eli. He pointed out that a church cannot rise above the spiritual level of its leaders.

Since John and Elma Wiebe will leave for fur-
ough in May, Glen and Reitha Klaassen will
place them as planners for future workers'
treats. We express our appreciation to
the Wiebes for the several inspiring retreats
which they have planned.



SECOND GENERATION CHRISTIANS UNITE IN MARRIAGE

Otilia Garzon and Luis Lugo were married on December 19, 1970, in the Anolaima Mennonite Church, with Rev. Armando Hernandez officiating. The groom is the son of Mrs. Margarita Lugo, who was in the first baptismal group in the church at La Mesa. The bride's father, Juan Garzon, has been an active lay teacher for many years. Luis is the pastor of the Anolaima Church. His wife is teaching at the new annex in Anolaima. We congratulate Luis and Otilia and wish them God's blessing as they go through life together.



CACHIPAY CHURCH MOVES FORWARD

In December, Alfonso Castro was elected full-time pastor of the Cachipay congregation. He had served on a pastoral committee for six months prior to that. Mr. Castro is presently a student in the Decentralized Bible Institute. Although he has only been a baptized church member for two years, he brings to his new position enthusiasm,



energy, intelligence and dedication. An increase in church attendance has already been noted and on Palm Sunday eight new members were baptized. May God bless Alfonso and Lilia in their new ministry.

NEW YEAR - NEW DIRECTORS - NEW SCHOOL

Several new developments have taken place on the school scene this year. Direction of the elementary schools in La Mesa and Cachipay was turned over to Colombian teachers and a primary class was begun at Anolaima.

In La Mesa Virginia Terreros is directing the school under the guidance of Vernelle Yoder. Virginia brings to her new position many years of experience in the teaching field. After completing the Ibague Normal School in 1959, she has given ten years of dedicated service to our schools in Cachipay and La Mesa. She is assisted by a full-time staff of three Colombian teachers: Anita Pedraza, Blanca Garzon and Marina Cepeda de Avendano. Leona Daza (nee Schrag) is helping out part-time until the return of Vernelle Yoder.

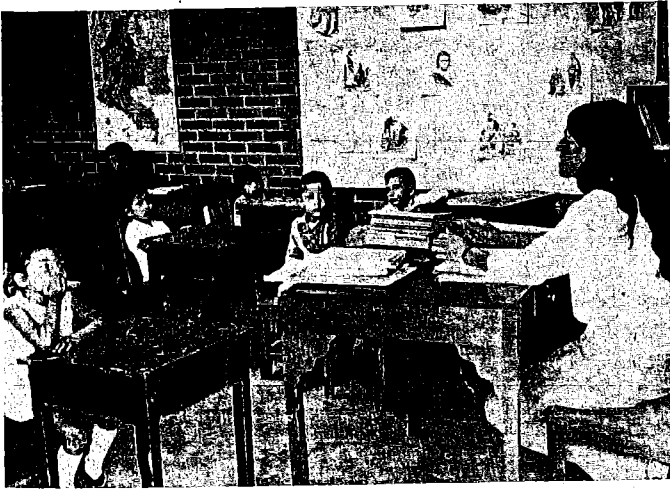


"I'm very pleased with the staff and with the way things are going," says Virginia, the directress. The teachers tend to attribute this excellent relationship to the fact that they have begun regular sharing times. They meet each Monday night to share their problems and concerns and to pray conversationally for each other and their small charges.

La Mesa's biggest problem just now is lack of adequate classroom space. Consequently, numerous applications had to be turned down. In all, 114 students are enrolled.

The school in Cachipay faces a different problem. Due to its location in the country, the community it serves is restricted and attendance has shown a gradual decline over the years. This year 58 students are registered in the elementary school program, and the full-time teaching staff was cut to three. Waldina Rojas is the new directress, assisted by Margaret Ediger. Waldina graduated from Ibague Normal School in 1967 and has had four years of teaching experience. She is assisted by Elisa Prieto and Lilia Castro, both graduates of the Cachipay school.





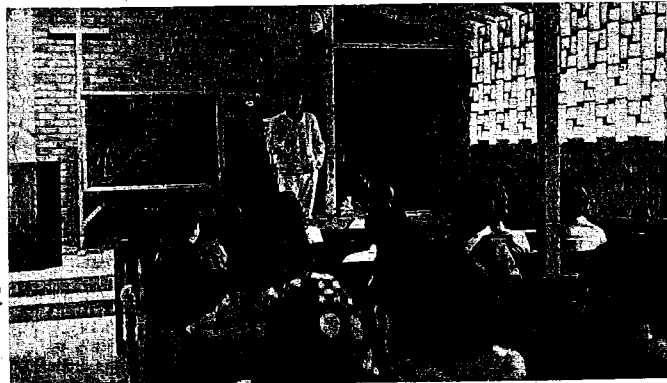
Otilia Lugo teaches 19 first-and second-graders in the church in Anolaima. Opening a school there was a last minute adjustment to the lowered attendance at the Cachipay school, but also an answer to a long-standing request on the part of the Anolaima congregation. The school functions as an annex to the Cachipay school.

YOUTH MEET IN CACHIPAY

From April 3-6 young people from the various Mennonite churches congregated at the Cachipay retreat grounds to participate in the annual youth retreat. The retreat, originally planned for the summer vacations in January, had to be postponed due to the unavailability of speakers at that time and the lack of an adequate dining area. In April the construction of the new dining hall was far enough along to permit the use of the new facilities. The group of retreaters was small, but the blessings great. Under the capable direction of Elisa Prieto, teacher at Cachipay, and Adolfo Palacino, member of the Ibaguë Church, the program was varied and inspirational.



In the morning sessions, Alvaro Pena, Presbyterian university student, led the retreaters to examine how their local youth groups function and helped them to discover clear objectives. His evening messages stressed individual commitment to Jesus Christ for salvation and service. The final message, "Christian Youth and Revolution," touched timely points in view of present conditions in Colombia and the world.



The highlight of the retreat? Was it the small group discussions? The treasure hunt? One of the films? The volleyball matches? Swimming? One of the messages? Browsing in the bookstore? The spontaneous singsongs? Or the campfire dedication service when many made a commitment to Christ? Perhaps each camper would answer differently. However, as Adolfo Palacina said in the last morning meditation, we trust that all will return to their respective homes reflecting Christ in their eyes and in their behavior, showing to others that they received a blessing at the retreat.

KLAASSEN MOVE AND ACTIVITIES

"Hello, is this house for rent?" was the question asked frequently by Glen and Reitha Klaassen. Since giving up their pastoral duties in the Bogota Church on March 1, the Klaassens have left the parsonage and moved to another address. But there is still plenty of work to do! Since 1967, Glen has been the elected executive secretary of the Colombian Mennonite Church. He will be giving more time to this as a personal tie between the various entities of the work, plus helping on a broader basis. As legal representative of the corporation, he will take care of property problems, visas for foreigners, leaving permits for foreigners, etc. The Klaassens hope to more adequately tend to Commission on Overseas Mission business and to frequent visitors. For several years, Glen helped out at the Union Biblical Seminary, Bogota branch. At present, he is teaching courses in pastoral theology and in hermeneutics.

Vernelle Yoder, who has directed the school at La Mesa for a number of years, is just completing a three-month furlough. Besides spending some time with her family in Berne, Indiana, she visited churches in Manitoba and the United States. Vernelle's mother passed away on April 5. Upon her return to Colombia in May, she will take over the administration of the bookstore in La Mesa while the Wiebes are on furlough. She will continue to teach in the La Mesa school on a part-time basis, as well as provide guidance for the new directress, Virginia Terreros.

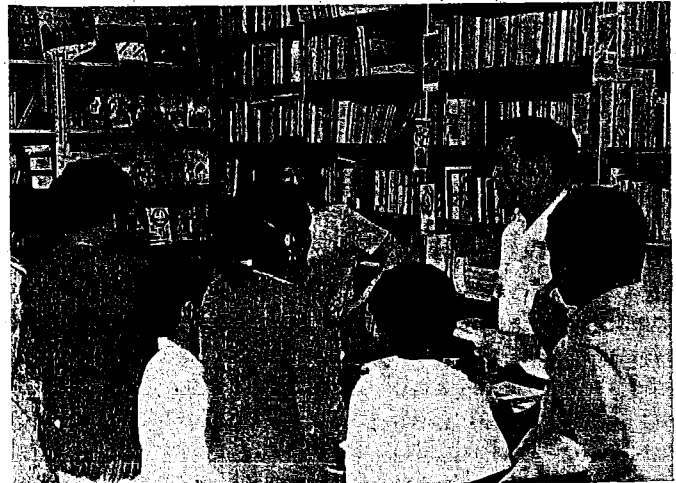


WIEBES TAKE YEAR FURLOUGH

In May, John and Elma Wiebe with their three daughters will leave for a year of furlough. They left Canada in August, 1966, for language school in Costa Rica. During their four years in La Mesa, Colombia, they have pastored the church there, and later dedicated themselves full-time to their growing literature and film ministry. Although their furlough plans are not completed, they hope to benefit from literature seminars and other studies related to their field of interest and work. Part of the time they will spend with relatives in Manitoba and British Columbia. They will also report to the churches on the work in Colombia. Pray that they will be guided in making their specific plans.



John and Elma
Debbie, Sheila and Cindy

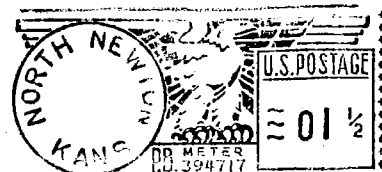


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CHANGE IN THE BOGOTA CHURCH

The First Mennonite Church of Bogota is entering a new era. Since its beginning in 1964, the church has been pastored by missionaries. Eight months ago, Pastor Glen Klaassen resigned, effective March 1, 1971, having served for three years. A church pastoral committee is looking for a pastor. In the meantime, the congregation has named a pulpit committee of five members to lead the Sunday services. A special speaker will be invited every third Sunday of each month. Mrs. Oliva de Bastidas, a deaconess, will serve as office coordinator two afternoons each week. Several members have offered to help with typing the church bulletins. Pray with us that a Colombian pastor may be found soon.

PRAISE AND PRAYER

PRAISE GOD for the new Colombian school directors.
PRAISE GOD for the sixteen new believers, eight of whom were baptized in Cachipay and eight in Anolaima.
PRAISE GOD for the good youth retreat at Cachipay.
PRAISE GOD for the progress in the development of the Cachipay retreat grounds.
PRAISE GOD that Vernelle Yoder will take over the bookstore during the Wiebes' furlough.
PRAY for a new pastor for the Bogota Church.
PRAY for the Wiebes as they go on furlough.
PRAY for the spiritual development of the more than 200 children in our schools.
PRAY for the seventeen students in the Decentralized Bible Institute.
PRAY for Gene and Dorene Claassen as they take up residence in Washington.

OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

POWER for a PURPOSE with a PRICE

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come..." Acts 2:1. So begins the inspiring account of Pentecost. But the power of the Holy Spirit is a continuing experience. That power has been felt in Colombia and in other areas. The early followers of Jesus paid a price. Recently, we commissioned a qualified and dedicated couple for Colombia. We do have people. But money is urgently needed. We invite all who receive this Colombian News to make a special testimonial, Pentecost Gift for the work in Colombia. Gifts may be given through the local church or sent to the Newton or Winnipeg offices.